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"THE EIGHT GREATEST FAÇADES IN THE WORLD."

IN THE BROCHURE SERIES for September, the readers of the magazine were invited to express by vote their opinions as to which were the "eight greatest façades in the world," and each voter was requested to submit a list of eight buildings.* The conditions limiting this choice were purposely made as loose as possible, to allow for the widest play of individual preference: façade was broadly defined, according to Webster, as "the front of a building, especially the principal front, having some architectural pretensions," and no limitations of style or period were imposed; but it was stipulated that the "greatness" should be considered purely from an architectural standpoint, not from that of historical or any other interest.

It was evident that the question created a lively interest, and a large number of lists was received. The votes having been tabulated, it was found that the following eight façades, given in the order of preference, had received the largest number. This list, chosen by consensus, may be said to represent, therefore, in the opinions of THE BROCHURE'S readers (the majority of whom are either architects or students of architecture), the "Eight Greatest Façades in the World."

1. FAÇADE OF NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS.
2. FAÇADE OF THE PARTHENON, ATHENS.
3. FAÇADE OF THE OPERA HOUSE, PARIS.
4. FAÇADE OF ST. MARK'S LIBRARY, VENICE.
5. FAÇADE OF ST. PETER'S, ROME.
6. FAÇADE OF AMIENS CATHEDRAL.
7. FAÇADE OF THE FARNESE PALACE, ROME.
8. FAÇADE OF THE DUCAL PALACE, VENICE.

Several well-known architects and laymen have been kind enough to give the readers of THE BROCHURE their critical

opinions of this choice, and these criticisms form an interesting commentary on the question itself and on its results. They are printed on another page of this issue.

XCVII.

NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS.

NOTRE Dame was founded in 1163 on the site of a church of the fourth century. It was consecrated in 1182, but the nave was not completed till the thirteenth century. The present façade dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century, but has been frequently altered and destroyed. During the Revolution the cathedral was sadly desecrated, indeed, a decree was passed in 1793 devoting the venerable pile to destruction, but this decree was afterward rescinded.

"Assuredly there are few more beautiful things in architecture than this façade, — the three deeply-dug porches with their pointed arches; the plinth, embroidered and indented with twenty-eight royal niches; the immense central rose-window, flanked by its two lateral windows, like the priest by his deacon and sub-deacon; the high, frail gallery of open-worked arches, supporting on its delicate columns a heavy platform; and, lastly, the two dark and massive towers, with their slated pent-houses. These harmonious parts of a magnificent whole, superimposed in five gigantic stages, and presenting, with their innumerable details of statuary, sculpture, and carving, an overwhelming yet not perplexing mass, combine in producing a calm grandeur. It is a vast symphony in stone, so to speak; the colossal work of man and of a nation, as united and as complex as the Iliad and the *romanceros* of which it is the sister; a prodigious production to which all the forces of an epoch contributed, and from every stone of which springs forth in a hundred ways the workman's fancy directed by the artist's genius; in one word, a

*The award of the prize in this Competition "J" will be found on the advertising page facing the inside cover.

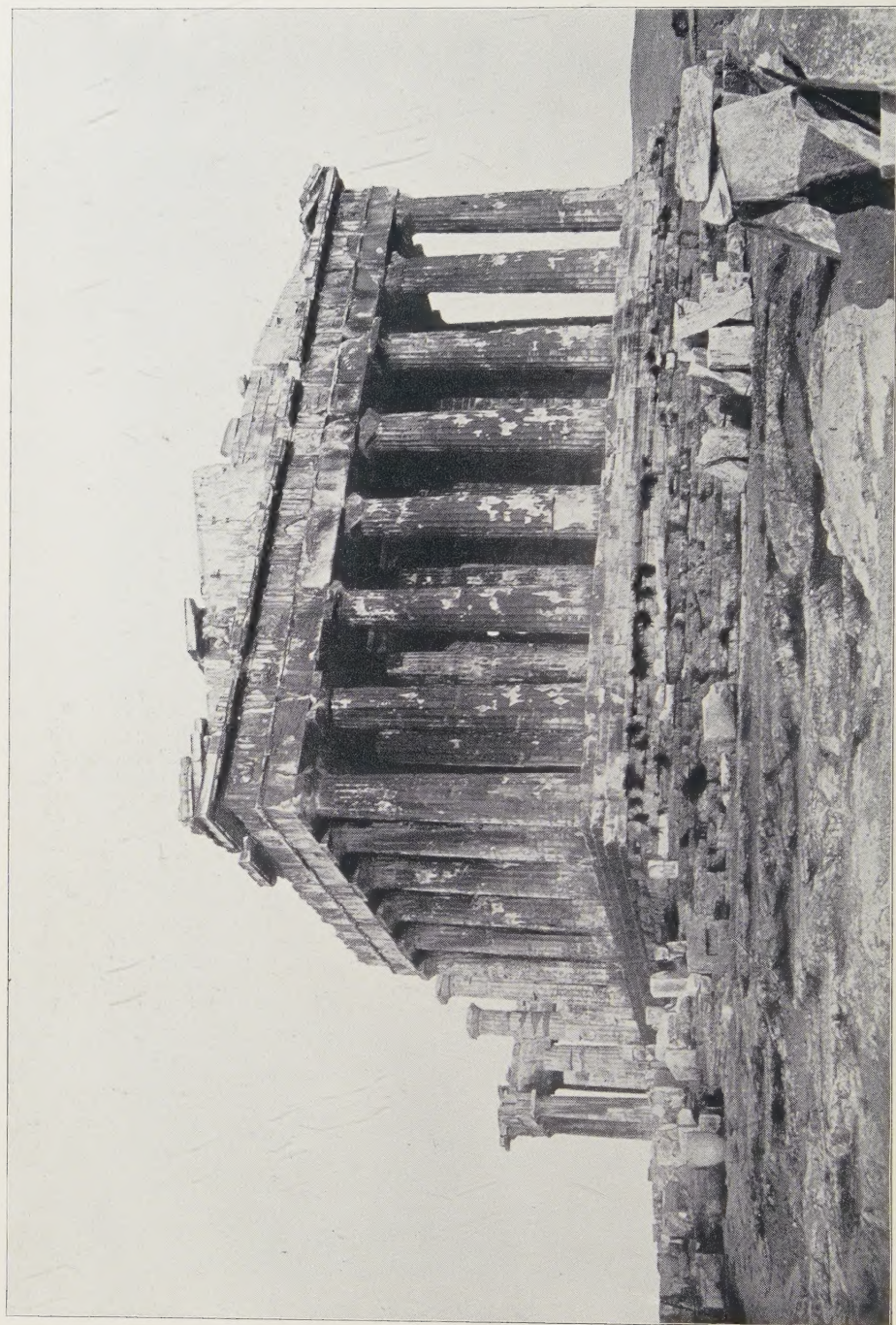


PLATE XCVIII

FACADE OF THE PARTHENON, ATHENS

kind of human creation, as strong and fecund as the divine creation from which it seems to have stolen the two-fold character: variety and eternity. . . .

"It is an edifice of the transition. The Saxon architect had set up the first pillars of the nave when the crusaders introduced the pointed arch, which enthroned itself like a conqueror upon those broad Roman capitals, and in the pointed style, mistress of all styles thenceforth, — inexperienced and timid at the beginning, but soon broadening and expanding, though not yet daring to shoot up in spires and pinnacles as it was to do later in so many marvellous cathedrals, but checked here, as it were, by the influence of the heavy Roman pillars, — the rest of the church was built.

"These hybrid structures are not the least interesting ones to the artist, the

thus the bees; and thus men. The great symbol of architecture, Babel, is a bee-hive.

"Great buildings, like great mountains, are the work of centuries. The man, the artist, and the individual efface themselves in these vast anonymous masses; human intelligence is concentrated and summed up in them. Time is the architect; the nation is the mason." — VICTOR HUGO: *Notre-Dame de Paris*.

XCVIII.

THE PARTHENON, ATHENS.

THIS, the official temple of Athene Parthenos (the Virgin) at Athens, was begun about 450 B.C. by Ictinus under the political direction of Pericles and the artistic presidency of Phidias.

"Time, more benignant than mankind,



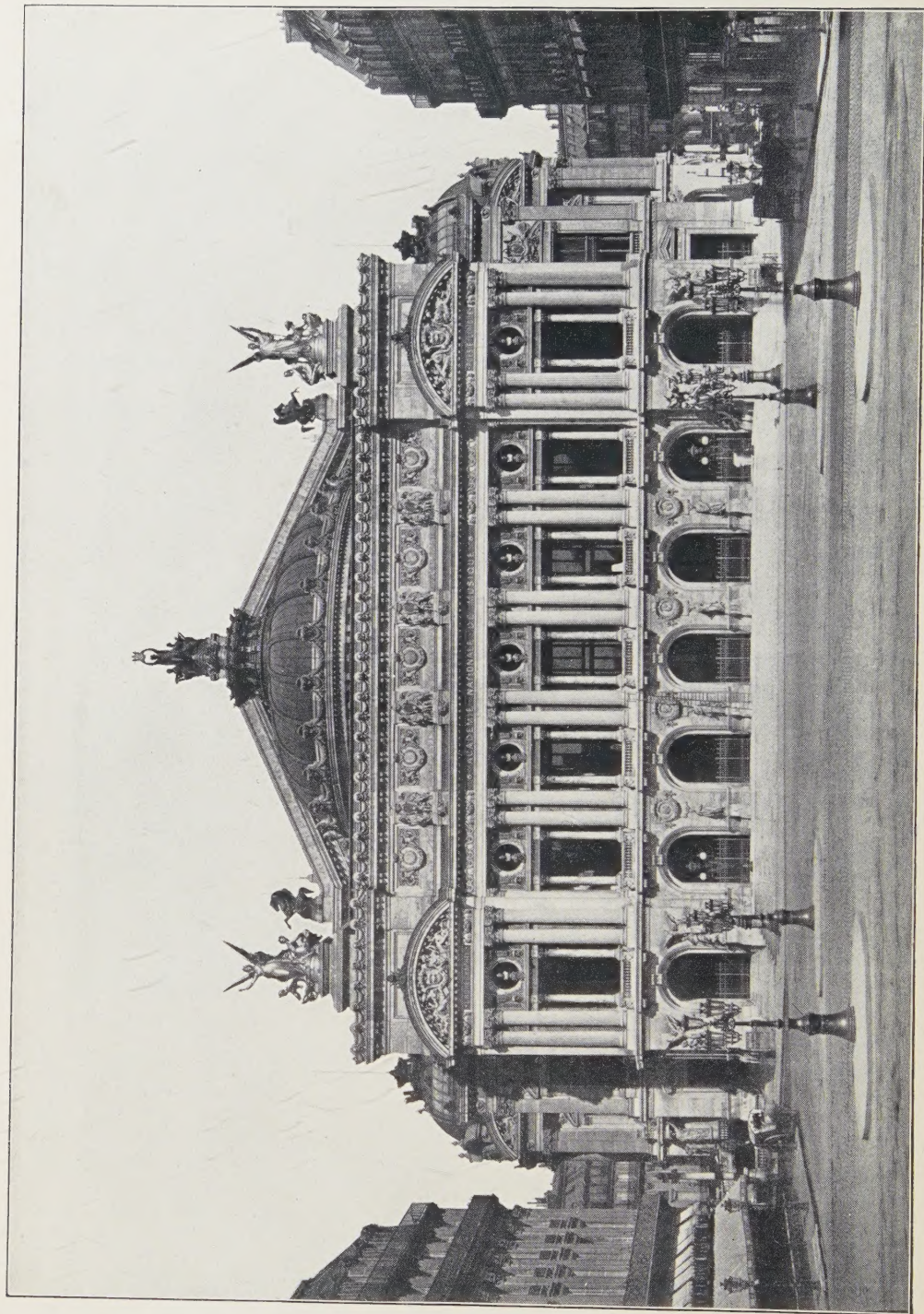
PARTHENON AND ERECHTHEUM

ACROPOLIS, ATHENS

antiquary, and the historian. They show how far architecture is a primitive art. Inasmuch as they demonstrate (what is also demonstrated by the Cyclopean remains, the pyramids of Egypt, and the gigantic Hindu pagodas), that the grandest productions of architecture are social more than individual works; the offspring, rather, of nations in travail than the inspiration of men of genius; the deposit left by a people; the accumulation of ages; the residuum of the successive evaporations of human society; in short, a species of formation. Every wave of time superimposes its alluvion, every generation deposits its stratum upon the building, every individual lays his stone. Thus build the beavers;

—as if, indeed, in sympathy with art, in pity for man's impotency to build such another marvel, — has respected this temple; and the Parthenon, set upon the Acropolis, as on a golden tripod, and surrounded by the sculptured choir of the Attic mountains, still shines in immortal, absolute and perfect beauty.

"The façade is composed of eight Doric columns, raised from the soil by three steps, and surmounted by a triangular pediment. Nothing could be simpler; a dozen lines ruled on a sheet of blank paper suffice to indicate the design; and yet before the reality your false imagination of it melts and disperses like the haze, and the façade, shining in virgin whiteness,



which your fancy has pictured, melts like a snowflake before the sun. For so many sunsets have steeped with their crimson floods these Pentelic columns since they first rose, twenty-four hundred years ago, at the bidding of Phidias in the crystal air of Greece, that the marble, purged by the lustration of that rich and fervent sunlight from the creeping leprosy of moss and fungus, has taken on rich and deep tones of red and orange and sienna, and to the beauty of form of which you have dreamed you find added the glory of color . . .

"Aye! we have given over our tattooings and our war-paintings, we no longer pierce our nostrils with rings of fish-bone, and we have exchanged our flint-tipped spears for rifles, but is that all? And before this temple, so noble, so beautiful, so accordant, as it were, to some divine harmony, we are overcome with a deep and humble revery, — a revery disturbed by unquiet questionings. Has our race indeed advanced along the paths of progress with such giant strides as we would fain believe? Has it not rather retrograded? for, with all our new and multiplied religions, and numberless inventions, — in spite of compass, printing-press and steam — has not the spirit of such beauty well-nigh vanished from the earth; are we not impotent to lure it back?" — THÉOPHILE GAUTIER: *Lois de Paris*.

"When seen, as it now only *can* be seen, its majestic ruins mutilated by Venetian bombs, by the mines of Morosini, by the hammer of Theodoric, by the artillery of Turk and Greek; its columns, in immense blocks, scattered upon the ground; its capitals broken, its triglyphs damaged by the agents of Lord Elgin,* its statues carried away by English vessels; enough remains to assure me that it is the most perfect poem written in stone upon the face of the earth. . . . I felt all antiquity in its divinest product." — LAMARTINE: *Voyage en Orient*.

* Lord Elgin's spoliation called forth Byron's epigram: "Quod non fecerunt Gothi, hoc fecerunt Scoti."

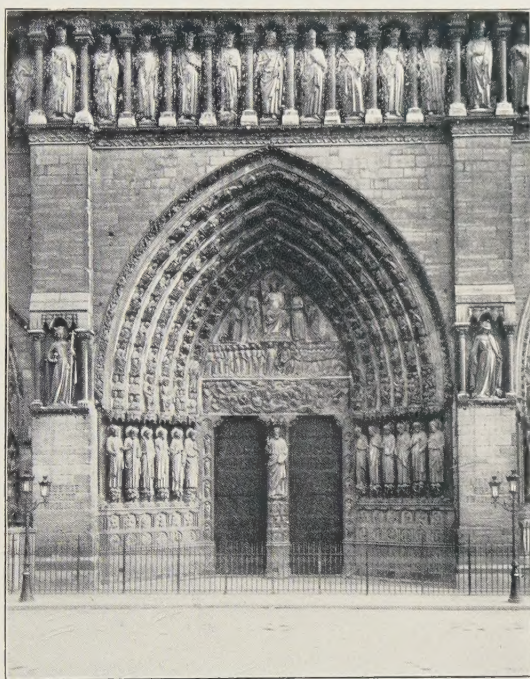
XCIX.

THE OPERA HOUSE, PARIS.

THIS, in area the largest theatre in the world, was designed by the late Charles Garnier, and was begun in 1861 and completed in 1874.

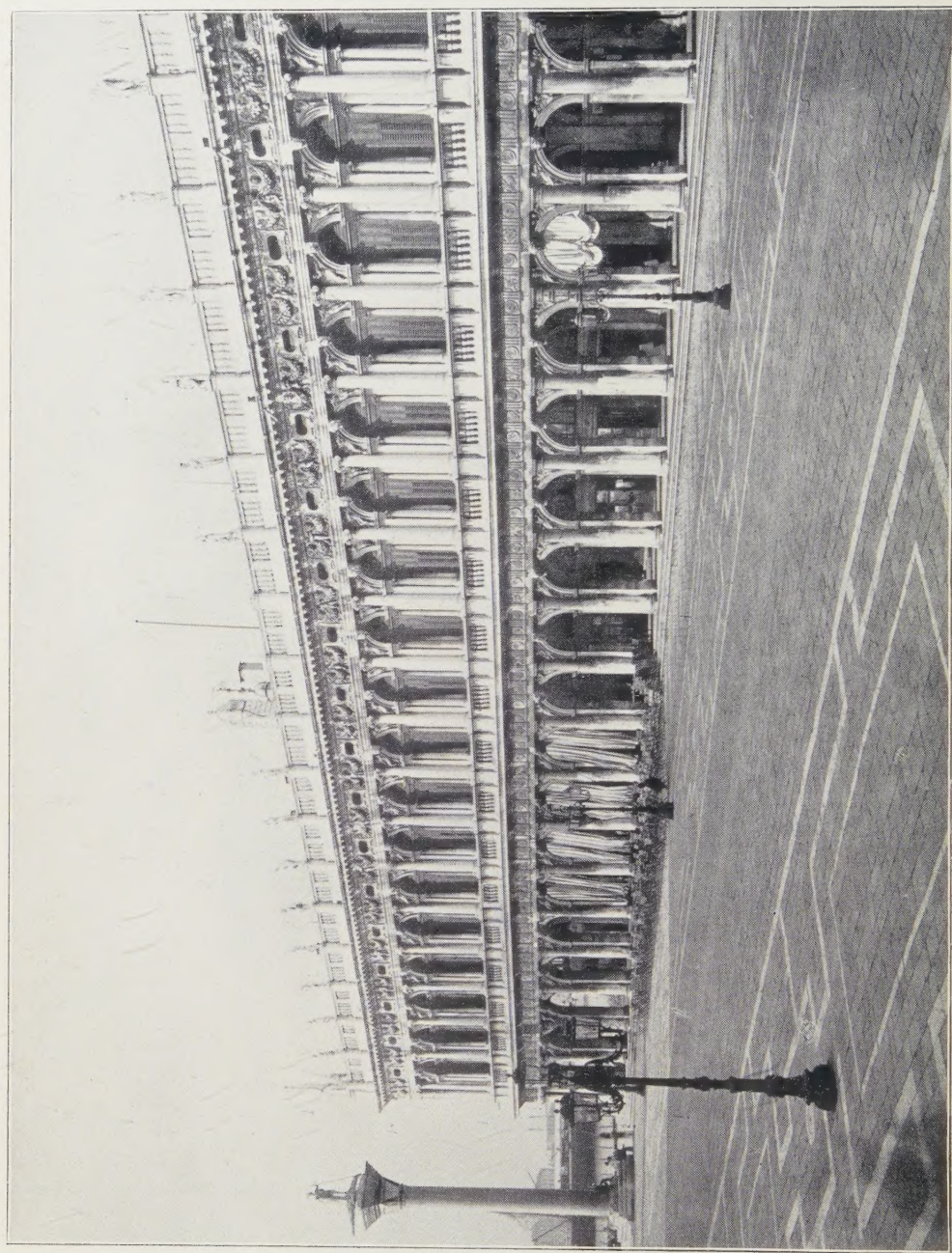
In his monograph, "*Le Nouvel Opéra de Paris*," published in 1878, M. Garnier, the architect, devotes his first chapter to a discussion of the façade. After having defended it, with great ingenuousness and wit, against the four charges which seem to him "to have a certain consistency, and to be worthy of attention," namely: (1) that the basement story (*soubassement*) is too low, (2) that the polychromatic decoration is "a heresy in Paris," (3) that there is too much gold, that it is too rich, and (4) that "it looks like a side-board covered with bric-a-brac," he goes on to point out the two main faults which he himself finds in the façade. These are, that the attic is too high — a defect caused in his plans by the proximity of high buildings which he feared would dwarf the Opera, — and that the decoration of the attic is not altogether to his liking. ("I made the mistake," he says, "of submitting my original scheme to several persons, and the still greater mistake of following their advice.") He concludes the chapter as follows: —

"I can find no further fault with the façade, but after what I have said it will be obvious that I do not consider it as absolutely perfect. But in spite of this, in spite of the imperfections of detail, and in spite of false notes which jar with the general harmony, I consider the façade as the most typical, the most individual part of the entire building; and were there many more faults in it, I should still, and shall always be proud of having designed it. For side by side with regrettable crudities there are perfect elegancies; and had I built no more than the loggia, and employed the colored marbles, I believe that I should, in large part, have fulfilled my



CENTRAL PORTAL

FACADE OF NOTRE DAME, PARIS



duty as an artist; sometimes mistaken, it is true, but striking out bravely for myself, and not clinging too close to the beaten paths.

"Ah! you critics who are so pitiless for the errors of architects, do you realize that you would require them, alone among all other artists and all other artisans, to succeed at the first trial? No rehearsals, no revisions, no experiments are possible for them. Their work grows day by day, before all eyes, and never do they see it as a whole till it is finished,—finished for good or ill. Which is there among you that would accept so terrible a responsibility? Would you, you dramatists and composers, who may alter your scores and librettos up to the last moment of the last rehearsal? Would you, you painters, who may touch and retouch your sketches and your canvases at will, and who will not part with your pictures till you have judged them perfected? Or would you, you authors, who may rewrite your manuscripts, and revise your proofs to your full satisfaction? Nay, even boots and garments may be tried on before they are purchased, and the cook taste his sauce before it goes to the table;—only the architect alone, forsooth must without fumbling and without hesitancy put his first shot straight into the bulls-eye! As for me, some of my arrows have missed the white, but, nevertheless, I feel that I can lay aside my bow without blushing unduly for my maladress."—CHARLES GARNIER: *Le Nouvel Opéra de Paris*.

C.

ST. MARK'S LIBRARY.

"A GRACEFUL building, of the central Renaissance, designed by Sansovino in 1536, and much admired by all architects of the school. It was continued by Scamozzi down the whole side of St. Mark's Place, adding another story above it, which modern critics blame as destroying the 'eurhythmia'; never considering that had the two low stories of the Library been continued along the entire length of the piazza they would have looked so low that the entire dignity of the square would have been lost. As it is, the Library is left in its original good proportions, and the larger mass of the Procuratie Nuove forms a more majestic, though less graceful, side for the great square."—RUSKIN: *Stones of Venice*.

"In 1536 Sansovino commenced what may be deemed the most beautiful secular building in Italy,—the Libreria Vecchia, and now for the first time the Venetians were made aware of the progress which the rest of Italy had been making during the preceding quarter-century in the knowledge and use of the true Roman column; for in comparison with this unique edifice the Venetian Renaissance had up to now been heir to the Classic but at second-hand. But in this building the architect had not

only grasped the general formulæ of Roman architecture, but with the sure hand of an artist, had animated its forms with the purest splendor of plastic art. Venice never fully appreciated, perhaps, the grandiose and energetic forms of its columns and cornices, the strong masses of cast shadow, nor above all, the extraordinary richness of its sculpture; but in its essence the building was nothing more than a splendid decoration, such as the Venetians loved. Given such a problem it would have been easy to make an edifice more characteristic, more expressive of its purpose; but it is, as it stands, nevertheless, one of the most, if not the most, admirable, two-story building in the world."—BURCKHARDT: *Der Cicerone*.

"With the work of Sansovino and Palladio the architecture of Venice attained a richness and harmony comparable to her achievements in painting, and their churches and palaces were worthy to shelter her great nobles—so aristocratic and splendid in aspect, so dignified and elegant in bearing.

"Theirs was no mere formal and pompous art, as the art of the following century was to become; it still glowed with something of that innate richness and fire of the race, that restrained passion, which was the most precious heritage of the Renaissance. . . . To the triumphs of Bramante, of Luciano da Laurano, of Alberti and of Brunelleschi, and to the teachings of antiquity, they added that which resulted in a complete revitalization of their art. As the creations of Michelangelo are marked by energy and movement, those of Giulio Romano or of Sammichele by hardness and formality, so those of Sansovino and Palladio are distinguished by grace and color—the work of a race of painters as opposed to the work of a race of designers."—MUNTZ: *Histoire de l'Art pendant la Renaissance*.

CI.

ST. PETER'S, ROME.

"IN 1506, on the 18th of April, Julius laid the first stone of St. Peter's according to the plans provided by Bramante. The basilica was designed in the shape of a Greek cross, surmounted by a colossal dome, and approached by a vestibule fronted with six columns. After Bramante's death Giuliano da Sangallo, Fra Giocondo, and Raphael successively superintended the construction, each for a short period. Raphael, under Leo X., was appointed sole architect, and went so far as to alter the design of Bramante by substituting the Latin for the Greek cross. Upon his death Baldassare Peruzzi continued the work, and supplied a series of new designs, restoring the ground-plan of the church to its original shape. He was succeeded in the reign of Paul III. by Antonio da Sangallo, who once more reverted to the Latin cross. After a short interregnum, Michel-

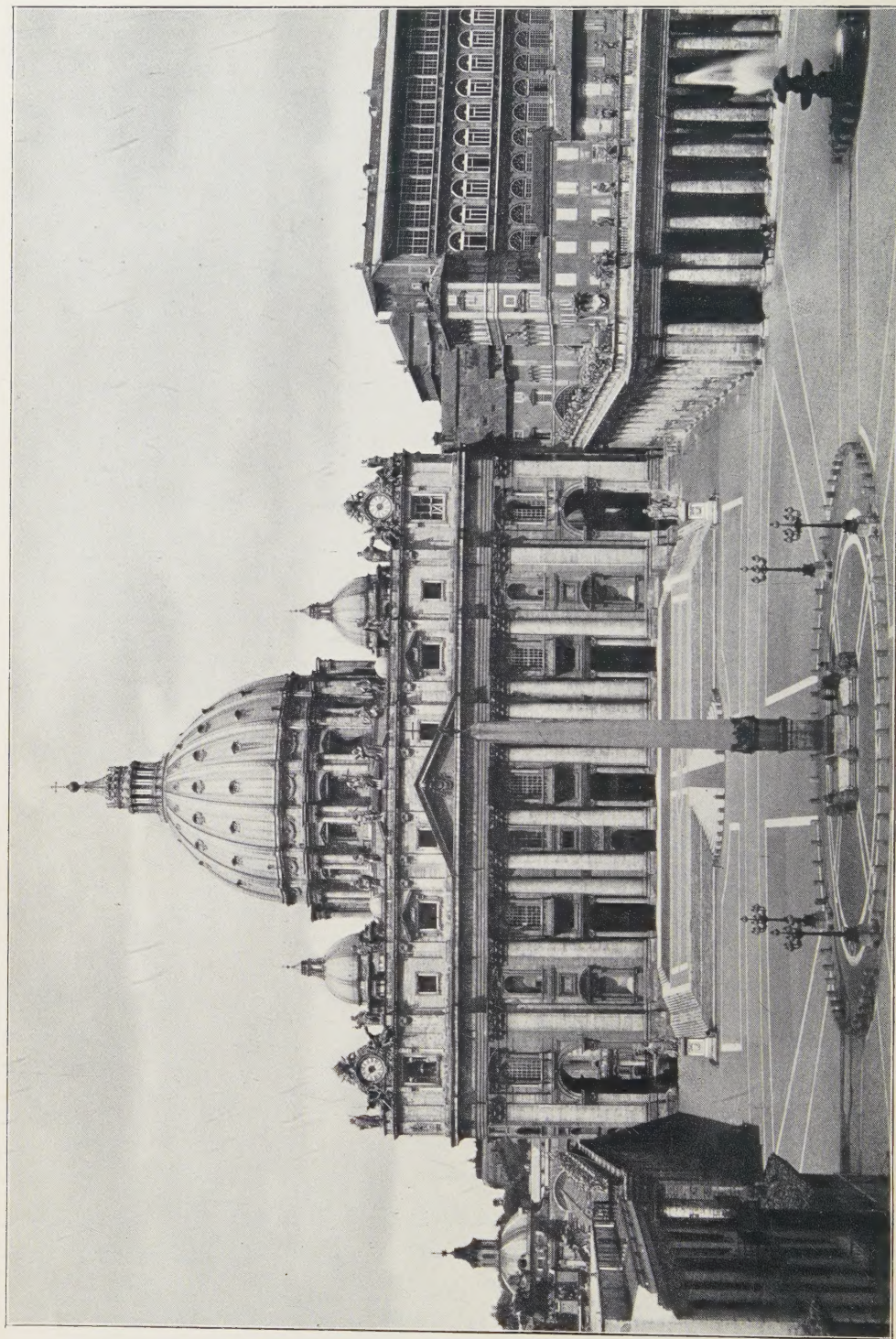


PLATE CI

angelo was called in 1535 to undertake the sole charge of the edifice. He declared that wherever subsequent architects had departed from Bramante's project, they had erred. 'It is impossible to deny,' he wrote, 'that Bramante was as great in architecture as any man has been since the days of the ancients. When he first laid the plan of St. Peter's, he made it not a mass of confusion, but clear and simple, well lighted, and so thoroughly detached that it in no way interfered with any portion of the palace.' Having thus pronounced himself in general for Bramante's scheme, Michelangelo proceeded to develop it in accordance with his own canons of taste. He retained the Greek cross; but the dome, as he conceived it, and the details designed for each section of the building, differed essentially from what the earlier master would have sanctioned. In spite of all changes of direction, the fabric of St. Peter's had been steadily advancing. Michelangelo was, therefore, able to raise the central structure as far as the drum of cupola before his death. His plans and models were carefully preserved, and a special papal ordinance decreed that henceforth there should be no deviation from the scheme he had laid down. Unhappily this rule was not observed . . .

"During the pontificate of Paul V., Carlo Maderna resumed the form of the Latin cross, and completed the nave and vestibule as they now stand upon this altered plan. The consequence is what has already been noted—at a moderate distance from the church the dome is lost to view; it only takes its true position of predominance when seen from afar. In the year 1626, St. Peter's was consecrated by Urban VIII., and the mighty work was finished. It remained for Bernini to add the colonnades of the piazza, no less picturesque in their effect than admirably fitted for the pageantry of world-important ceremonial."—SYMONDS: *The Renaissance in Italy*.

"A work so vast and so various must be approached in the spirit of knowledge and docility. Most buildings have an unity of plan; and their different parts, and the successive changes in structure and detail are like variations upon one musical theme. Not so with St. Peter's. It awakens no ideas of unity or simplicity. It is a great representative structure, which gathers within itself the convergent rays of innumerable lights. It is a temple, a museum, a gallery of art, and a mausoleum. If a fanciful comparison may be pardoned, other churches are gardens, but St. Peter's is a landscape. Its growth and history embrace nearly three hundred and fifty years, and it expresses not only the will of different popes, the tastes of successive architects, but the changes and revolutions of time itself. Its foundation is nearly coeval with the invention of printing; before the sacristy was completed the splendid researches by Watt had been crowned with success; and in the interval had occurred the dis-

covery of America and the Reformation. Religion, politics, literature, art and manners had gone through whole cycles of mutation, and the web of society had been unravelled and rewoven."—HILLARD: *Six Months in Italy*.

CII.

AMIENS CATHEDRAL.

AMIENS Cathedral was erected, 1220–1228, by the architects Robert de Luzarche, Thomas de Cormont and his son, Renault. Of the two uncompleted towers of the west façade the lower belongs to the thirteenth, the loftier to the fifteenth century.

"It is the admitted privilege of a custode who loves his cathedral to depreciate, in its comparison, all the other cathedrals of his country that resemble, and all the edifices on the globe that differ from it. But I love too many cathedrals—though I have never had the happiness of becoming the custode of even one—to permit myself the easy and faithful exercise of the privilege in question; and I must vindicate my candor and my judgment in the outset, by confessing that the Cathedral of Amiens has nothing to boast of in the way of towers,—that its central *flèche* is merely the pretty caprice of a village carpenter,—that the total structure is in dignity inferior to Chartres, in sublimity to Beauvais, in decorative splendor to Rheims, and in loveliness of figure sculpture to Bourges. It has nothing like the artful pointing and moulding of the arcades of Salisbury—nothing of the might of Durham. No Dædalian inlaying like Florence, no glow of mystic fantasy like Verona. And yet, in all, and more than these, ways, outshone or overpowered, the Cathedral of Amiens deserves the name given it by M. Viollet-le-Duc—'The Parthenon of Gothic Architecture.'

"From the unhewn block set on end in the Druid's bethel to this Lord's house and blue vitrailed gate of heaven, you have the entire course and consummation of the northern religious builder's passion and art."—RUSKIN: *The Bible of Amiens*.

"Arch above arch, pinnacle above pinnacle, column above column, pier above pier, its vanishing lines lost at last in the heavens above, the wondrous façade bursts upon the astonished eye in an overpowering grandeur, a wealth of sculpture, an exquisite grace of line and composition unlike anything else in all architecture . . .

"The utmost touch of spire is not here as Robert of Luzarche meant it should be, but all the tower lines are eloquent of it. In their own beauty of form and thought they point to the beauty's consummation, until the completed spire is seen in a dream, almost as Robert must have seen it."—LARNED: *Churches and Castles of Medieval France*.



PLATE CII

FACADE OF THE CATHEDRAL OF AMIENS

CIII.

THE FARNESE PALACE, ROME.

THE Farnese Palace was commenced in 1530 by Alessandro Farnese, who became Pope Paul III. Sangallo, the younger, was the first architect, and Michelangelo completed the building by the addition of the top story and cornice. The blocks of travertine of which it was constructed were taken from the Theatre of Marcellus and the Colosseum, of whose ruin, says Gibbon, "the nephews of Paul III. are the guilty agents, and every traveller who views the Farnese Palace may curse the sacrilege of these upstart princes."

"Of all these fossils, the grandest, noblest, most imposing and rigidly magnificent is, in my opinion, the Farnese Palace. It is situated in a vile quarter. In order to reach it you pass near the gloomy and dilapidated Cenci Palace. Five minutes before I had traversed the Ghetto of the Jews, a veritable nest of pariahs in a labyrinth of crooked streets and foul gutters, its houses, with their dislocated bulging fronts, reminding one of a dropsical hernia, their dark courts discharging exhalations, and their winding stone steps clinging to walls reeking with the filth of centuries. Ugly, dwarfed and pallid figures swarmed here like mushrooms growing on a heap of rubbish.

"Your mind filled with images of this description, you reach the palace. Alone, in the middle of a dark square, it rises enormous, lofty and massive, like a fortress capable of discharging and receiving the heaviest fire of ordnance. It belongs to the grand era; its architects, Sangallo, Michelangelo and Vignola, and especially the first named, have stamped upon it the veritable Renaissance character—that of virile energy. It is indeed akin to the torsos of Michelangelo; you feel in it the inspiration of the great pagan epoch, the age of tragic passions and of unimpaired energies that foreign dominion and the Catholic restoration were about to weaken and degrade.

"The exterior is a colossal, square form, with strong barred windows, almost wholly without ornament. It had to resist attack, endure for centuries, and lodge a prince and a small army of retainers; this was the first idea of its master and of the architect—that of the pleasing came afterward. But the term pleasing is badly chosen; amidst bold and dangerous customs, amusement and graceful amiability, as we comprehend them, are never thought of; what they prized was grave masculine beauty, and they expressed it by lines and by constructions as well as by frescoes and statues. Above this grand, almost bare façade, the cornice that forms the edge of the roof is both rich and severe, and its continuous framework, so noble and appropriate, grips the entire mass together, so that the whole is a single form. The enormous bossages

of the angles, the variety of the long lines of windows, the thickness of the walls, combine in one aspect the ideas of grace and of beauty."—H. TAINE: *Italie*.

CIV.

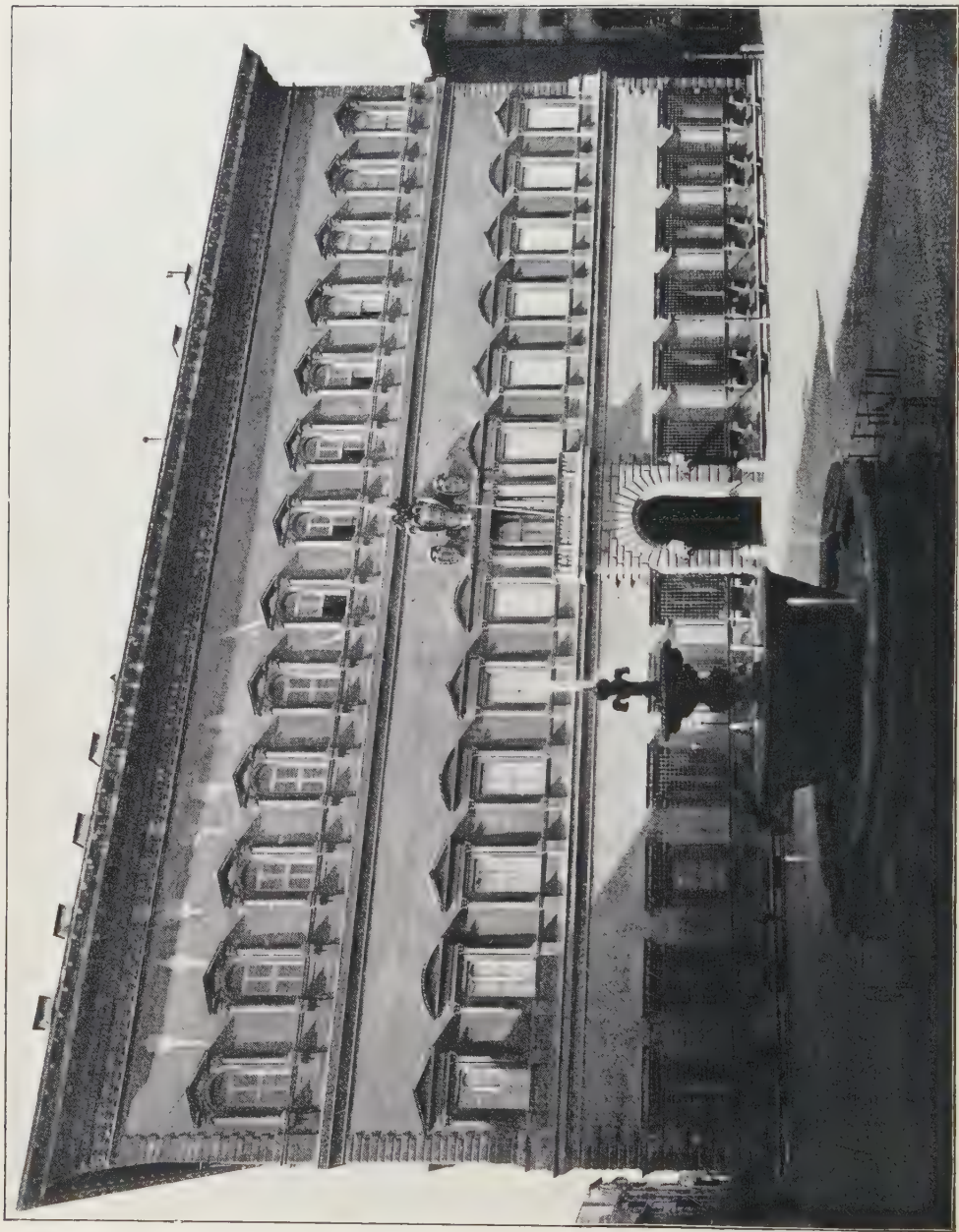
THE DUCAL PALACE, VENICE.

THE Ducal Palace was originally founded in 800, and afterwards destroyed five times and as often re-erected in grander style. The present façade is said to have been built in 1424-42 by Giovanni Boni and his sons Pantallone and Bartolomeo Buon the elder.

"It was decreed [because of an impoverished treasury], that none should dare to propose to the Signory of Venice to ruin the old palace and rebuild it more richly, and there was a penalty of one thousand ducats against any one who should break it. Then the Doge, wishing to set forward the public good, said to the Signory . . . that they ought to rebuild the façade of the old palace, and that it ought to be restored, to do honor to the nation; and so soon as he had done speaking, the Avogadori demanded the penalty from the Doge for having disobeyed the law; and the Doge, with ready mind, paid it, remaining in his opinion that the said fabric ought to be built. And so in the year 1422 . . . it was passed in the Council of the Pregadi that the new palace should be begun . . . and so, on the 24th day of March, 1424, it was begun to throw down the old palace, and to build it anew."

—CADORIN: *Pareri di XV. Architetti*.

"Like a magnificent diamond in a brilliant setting the Ducal Palace effaces the rest. I can describe nothing today—all I care to do is to enjoy myself. Never has like architecture been seen; here, all is novel; you feel yourself drawn out of the conventional; you realize that outside of Classic or Gothic forms, which we repeat and impose on ourselves, there is an entire world; that human invention is illimitable; that, like nature, it may break all the rules, and produce a perfect work after a model opposed to that to which we are told to conform. Every habit of the eye is reversed, and we see here, with surprise and delight, oriental fancy grafting the full on the empty instead of the empty on the full. A colonnade of robust shafts bears a second and lighter one decorated with cusped arches and with trefoils, while above this support, so frail, expands a massive wall of red and white marbles whose courses interlace each other in designs and reflect the light. Above, a cornice of open pyramids and pinnacles intersects the sky with its border,—a marble vegetation, bristling and blooming above the vermillion and pearly tones of the façade."—H. TAINE: *Italie*.



"THE EIGHT GREATEST FAÇADES IN THE WORLD."

A DISCUSSION BY CHARLES H. MOORE, A. O. ELZNER, JULIAN MILLARD, H. LANGFORD WARREN, RUSSELL STURGIS, HENRY VAN BRUNT, A. D. F. HAMLIN, RALPH ADAMS CRAM, ROBERT W. GIBSON, CHARLES F. SCHWEINFURTH, S. S. BEAMAN, WM. A. BORING, DWIGHT HEALD PERKINS, WALTER COOK, GEORGE CARY, W. T. COMSTOCK, ROBERT S. PEABODY, E. A. KENT, SYLVESTER BAXTER, CLAUDE FAYETTE BRAGDON, THOMAS HASTINGS, LOUIS MULLGARDT, C. H. BLACKALL, J. B. NOEL WYATT, BRUCE PRICE, WM. ROTCH WARE, JOSEPH WARREN YOST.*

THE following letters were received in reply to a request for a brief criticism of choice of the "eight greatest façades" compiled by THE BROCHURE's readers. The most marked feature of the discussion is the divergence of opinion it exhibits. There is no building named in the list whose right there is not questioned; none which is not deemed by some critic to deserve a leading place.

Two points, brought forward in regard to the question, require, perhaps, a word of explanation. It is objected, first, that some of the façades named are not façades at all, in the more limited and esoteric sense. That they were included may be due to the broad definition of the word, (merely, "the principal front of a building,") which was purposely adopted in announcing the contest. Second, some critics consider that the result might have been made more satisfactory had architectural greatness been defined. But is there any such definition upon which competent judges would agree? Is there any such definition, less general than the common understanding of the word "greatness," which would not bar out some building clearly entitled to be called "great"?

To those gentlemen who have, with some strenuousness, objected to the whole undertaking, on the ground that it is, and always will be, impossible to determine finally and with authority which are the eight or the eighty greatest façades, it may be answered, humbly, that THE BROCHURE had no such high ambition. If the discussion has proved interesting, or in any way profitable, its aim has been achieved; and surely no harm has been done: the question is returned as good as new:—What *are* the eight greatest façades in the world?

CHARLES H. MOORE,
PROFESSOR OF ART, HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

It is interesting to find that by a general consensus of opinion among your architectural fraternity, the west front of the Cathedral of Paris stands first on the list of eight façades, ranked by them as the greatest in the world. The monumental grandeur, architectural propriety and artistic charm of this noble composition must, I think, impress every competent beholder with the feeling that it is the most admirable thing in the way of a façade that human genius has produced at any epoch, or in any style. I would observe with respect to the other designs named in the list, that only two of them *are* façades in the same sense. The façade of Amiens, and that of St. Peter's in Rome are the only others mentioned which are architectural compositions intended to emphasize and mark with peculiar dignity the entrance fronts of the buildings which

they enclose. The Parthenon has no façade in this sense. The idea of a principal façade was never developed among the Greeks. The façade of the Paris Opera House may have some claim to be ranked with those named above; but those of the Farnese Palace, St. Mark's Library and the Ducal Palace are not materially different from one or more other sides of the respective buildings. The idea of the great entrance façade was developed by the Romanesque and Gothic architects, and is a peculiar architectural product of the middle ages. It was foreshadowed, indeed, in the Egyptian Temple and in some of the early Roman churches of the East; and it was carried over into the church architecture of the Renaissance; but it is not a feature that properly belongs either to Classic or neo-Classic architecture.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.

CHARLES H. MOORE.

A. O. ELZNER,
OF MESSRS. ELZNER & ANDERSON.

I am glad to see that Notre Dame Cathedral has found so many admirers, for it is certainly one of the finest things that ever was done by man. However, I do not think that it ought to be placed before the Parthenon, for, notwithstanding the remarkable grouping of its parts and its dignity and repose, and at the same time its picturesque-ness and all the other qualities, too numerous to mention, which it possesses that contribute to its greatness, it must not be forgotten that the Parthenon is unique among all the buildings in the world, in that it is the very embodiment, purely and simply, of all the great principles which have governed and will continue to govern architectural design. The Opera House at Paris may have qualities which justify its being ranked among the great façades in the world, but there is so much about it that invites unfavorable criticism that it certainly does not justify a third place among all others. This seems to be an unmerited distinction. The other buildings mentioned leave little room for comment, except that Amiens Cathedral lacks the simplicity which, as we all know, is the highest art, and I should think that there would be other façades that ought to take its place in this classification.

I regret that St. John Lateran at Rome is not among these leaders. It is beautiful in its gigantic scale and in its quiet, dignified proportions, and if it were better known would undoubtedly be found a rich source of inspiration.

CINCINNATI.

A. O. ELZNER.

JULIAN MILLARD,
PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE, UNIVERSITY
OF PENNSYLVANIA.

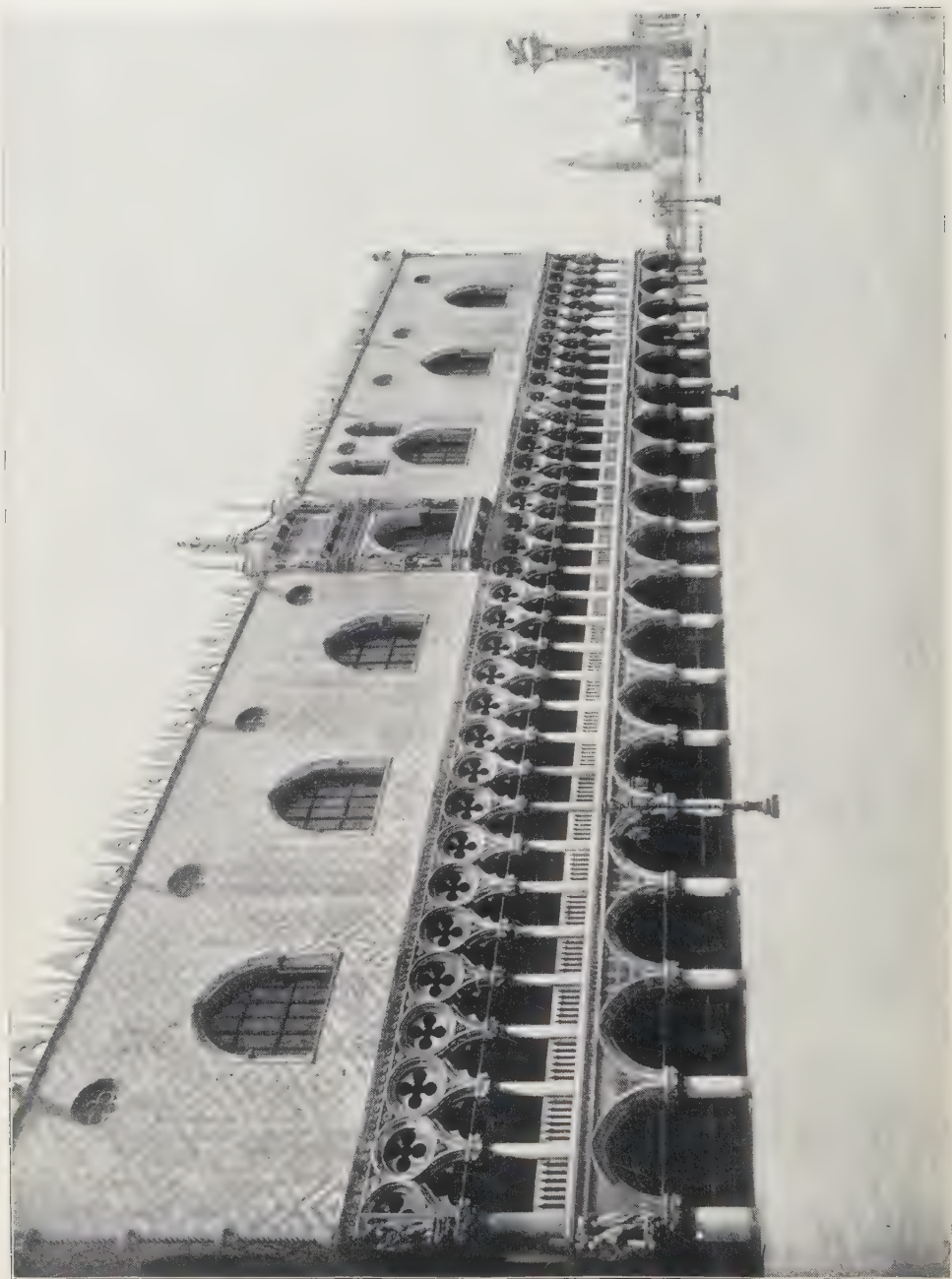
A very important and undetermined element in the discussion is as to what constitutes "greatness" in architecture. My impulse is to exclude from the list the Paris Opera, St. Peter's, the Doge's Palace and Amiens Cathedral, and to introduce the Cathedral at Florence, St. Mark's at Venice, the Capitol at Washington, the Pandolfini Palace, Florence, and perhaps the Strozzi in place of the Farnese. The list as given is, however, very suggestive as showing what are the ideals of the younger professional element. Judging by this list the outlook for American architecture is very encouraging.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA. JULIAN MILLARD.

H. LANGFORD WARREN,
PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE, HARVARD
UNIVERSITY.

The vote is amusing in respects, some especially in the inclusion of the façade of St. Peter's! Most critics are agreed in condemning Maderna's colossal monstrosity, and in regretting that the integrity of Michelangelo's great design should have been thus ruined. Surely there are many Renaissance façades which are greater, if not so big. On the whole it is gratifying to see so many of the really best things of the world come uppermost in such a vote. But I have not much sympathy with the attempts to deal in superlatives which just now seem so popular.

* A few replies were received too late for publication in this issue. They will be printed in January.



So much depends on the point of view, there is always so much to qualify any judgment, that a selection of greatest things is as apt to be misleading as really helpful. I should hesitate myself to select the eight greatest anything. It is interesting to note that with regard to things really as near perfection as mortals may hope to reach there are no serious differences of opinion among instructed men. The Parthenon and Notre Dame of Paris are, it seems to me, such productions, and are the only two of the eight named which I should without any hesitation place in such a list.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY. H. LANGFORD WARREN.

RUSSELL STURGIS.

I think the voters for "the eight greatest façades in the world" were considering the architectural merit of the building, in each case, rather than that of any one of its fronts. It seems to me that only one of the eight buildings named can be said to have a façade; that is to say, a front designed by itself and considered apart from its place as one side, one front, one exterior of the building. Certainly neither the Parthenon nor St. Mark's Library nor the Ducal Palace can be said to have any façade whatever. If,

then, we are to consider the question to be, Which one of the eight buildings named presents the finest front in one direction? I should vote without much hesitation for St. Mark's Library in Venice; and this without implying that its style is the noblest or that it belongs to the greatest school, but because, judged by the canons of its school and by the necessities of its time, it seems to me the nearest to ideal success. There are, I think, finer and more complete west fronts of cathedrals than that of Amiens or that of Paris. Of the Parthenon no one can really judge, but my impression has always been that it was too wide for its height, and that the corresponding front of a hexastyle temple must have been the finer thing. The other buildings seem to me out of the running, with the single exception of the Ducal Palace at Venice. Much as I love that building and supremely fine as are its constructional scheme, its architectural details and its sculpture, I still think that its opposite neighbor beats it as a harmonious composition.

I cannot close without congratulating you and the public upon the evidence given by this vote that those fronts which are the most esteemed by your readers are, all but one, fronts of buildings which are designed all around, so to speak. The influence on modern architecture of the street front considered as a primary subject of design has been extremely injurious in this—that the younger men learn to design in the flat. Elevations, they come to think, are the finest things in the world, and the proportions which look well on the drawing-board will be sure, they think, to look well in execution. The present competition and its results seem to afford the valuable lesson that the best front, after all, is one side of a building which is designed as the building and not as a drawing.

NEW YORK CITY.

RUSSELL STURGIS

HENRY VAN BRUNT,
OF MESSRS. VAN BRUNT & HOWE.

If it were possible for any two architects, acting independently of one another, to agree upon a list of the eight best façades, to give them anything approaching the same

order of preference, and to prove their choice by any process of demonstration, such a consensus as you have invited would refer only to facts practically established, and would have therefore no greater interest than an ordinary academical exercise; it would have been a test rather of the knowledge than of the professional judgment of the contestants. But there are so many different kinds and qualities of architectural merit in a façade; merit is expressed under so many different conditions, and is so nearly equally distributed among many buildings of the highest rank that, with one notable exception, it is impossible to prove that there are in the world eight façades distinctly better than eight other façades which might be chosen, or, indeed, than eight times eight. The exception referred to seems to have a bearing upon the present consensus.

Reber correctly formulated the deliberate opinion of the civilized world regarding the Greek style of the age of Pericles, when he pronounced it the highest ideal of architecture for the entire future of the human race. It is the only style which, in logical process of development, ever culminated in a single building—a building of such consummate beauty, purity and refinement that it could never

have a rival. And yet this building, the most inspiring and suggestive of the creations of man, has been accorded only a second place upon a list, in which the fifth place has been given to poor Carlo Maderna's façade of St. Peter's, the biggest and saddest architectural error ever committed. In the same list the unfinished west front of the cathedral of Paris, which is a preparation for two spires which have never been built, has the first place (before the Parthenon) and that of Amiens the sixth; but the higher stage of Gothic progress exhibited in Rheims is not recognized. The appearance of the Library of St. Mark in the fourth place and of the Farnese Palace in the seventh, as representative of the consummation of the Italian Renaissance, is a perfunctory, but perhaps a defensible acknowledgment of the indebtedness of modern architecture to this phase of neo-Classical art; while that of the New Opera in Paris, immediately after the Parthenon and before



PORTION OF FAÇADE

DUICAL PALACE, VENICE

the works of the Italian masters, is a compliment to modern French Renaissance, which perhaps Charles Garnier, as its interpreter, deserved from ingenuous young America, but which he would have blushed to acknowledge; and it is proper and natural that at the close of this nineteenth century of architecture, over which the eloquence of Ruskin has had so great an influence, his "Central Building of the World" should be accorded an honorary place among the eight; but this place is three places after that given to the unfortunate front of St. Peter's, which offends against every principle of design taught by the author of "The Stones of Venice."

Indeed, out of the immense inheritance of beautiful designs which has come to us from the embarrassing bounty of the past, to select and set in order of merit eight façades as the best, is a task which might betray the wisest among us into expressions today which he would be the first to repudiate tomorrow. In like manner the consensus of opinion which we are now considering, will not commend itself to the sober second thought of the contestants. Neither the selection nor the order of preference is capable of rational explanation, and it is evident that the voters never considered the problem seriously, or attempted to analyze their preferences. I venture to suggest that per-

has a better and more deliberate and significant test of judgment and knowledge would be exhibited in a choice of the six or eight buildings in the world which have exercised the greatest influence over the development of style.

KANSAS CITY.

HENRY VAN BRUNT.

A. D. F. HAMLIN,
PROFESSOR OF ARCHITECTURE, COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY.

I imagine the list would have been a little less incoherent had there been some specification as to the meaning intended by "greatest." St. Peter's, for instance, has a façade which "excluding the great court in front which is no part of the façade," is hardly a "great" work except in a physical sense, since it has neither repose nor brilliancy nor refinement nor richness, all of which exist in Rheims, and Amiens and even in the Paris Opera House; while Notre Dame, if less ornate than these, has a majesty and breadth of composition that make up for its lesser brilliancy, and certainly warrant its being at or near the head of the list. It is interesting to note that these qualities of repose and simplicity of mass have evidently impressed the readers of THE BROCHURE SERIES with peculiar force: let it be hoped that they will design under the influence of that happy impression.

Of course there can be but one "greatest" façade, and no vote can settle which one that is. What this vote indicates is really the tendency of taste among THE BROCHURE'S readers, and the list is evidence of a catholicity of taste which is hopeful. Two French and one Italian Gothic building, one antique Greek, three Italian Renaissance and one modern French design make up the eight. But it also suggests that there are unexplored regions for these readers, or at least unfamiliar examples in the history of architecture. The Parthenon, which is not a "façade building," so to speak, could never have equalled, as a façade, the magnificence of the great altar at Pergamon, or the splendor of the Ulpian Basilica. If the examples to be voted on be limited to extant edifices, there are many which press closely on those which won the majority of the suffrages:—the noble portico of the Parthenon, the exquisitely embroidered but stately Taj at Agra, the Jumma Musjid at Delhi and the glorious façade of Rheims Cathedral (in my judgment the most superb blending of constructive art with sculpture that the world has seen). There are the stupendous west end of Cologne Cathedral and the Colonnade of the Louvre, a work in its own domain unsurpassed, and the grandly simple Arc de l'Etoile, Chambord and the Vieux Louvre, and others besides, any of which might in another circle of architect voters receive the suffrages accorded to some of those elected by your readers, and with quite equal justice.

It would be interesting to study the elements of greatness in the eight façades which have won in this election, and to learn the predominant reasons for their selection. But since that cannot be done, it might be not amiss to suggest that your readers should study carefully these eight works and a few others like them, to see whether they cannot fathom something of their secret of success and derive therefrom instruction and inspiration for their own labors.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY.

A. D. F. HAMLIN.

RALPH ADAMS CRAM,
OF MESSRS. CRAM, GOODHUE & FERGUSON.

I gather that these façades were to be judged simply as architectural compositions, and without reference to the rest of the buildings or to the accidental elements of beauty and attractiveness which may come from age, the development of sequent styles, or historical associations. Considered from this standpoint it seems to me that the list is open to some criticisms.

That the front of Notre Dame, Paris, should be placed first seems to me entirely right, and the fact that it should have been chosen speaks remarkably well for the judgment of those who voted; the Farnese Palace should also, it seems to me, rank among the great façades of the world, while I suppose the Parthenon must also take position here, though it seems to me the paramount beauty of this building is due rather to its quality as a whole than to the design of the façade proper. The fashion of separating arbitrarily the front of the building from the rest of the structure, and considering it by itself, is a modern one, and to my mind very unhealthy, and I cannot feel that any great building should be judged after this fashion. Of the other façades included in your list there are two that I think should be dropped out at once, viz., St. Peter's, Rome, which seems to me careless in composition, poor in mass, and clumsy in detail; and the Paris Opera House, which latter, however wonderful it may be in point of original detail, certainly lacks that dignity, straight-forwardness and simplicity necessary to give it a paramount position. Amiens Cathed-

dral is one of the most beautiful façades in existence, but this beauty is due to the accidents of changing styles. The front is not a complete architectural composition, for this reason, and I think that Rheims Cathedral should be substituted in its place, since this front is of one period, and absolutely united in design. St. Mark's Library in Venice is of course delightful, but it doesn't seem to me "great," while the Ducal Palace is too accidental, and owes its extraordinary beauty too much to circumstances other than those that are purely architectural, to rank with the other great work.

Were I to correct this list to suit myself I should certainly substitute in place of St. Peter's the Colonnade of the Louvre in Paris, the Ca Doro in Venice, and the front of Orvieto Cathedral. These three latter buildings are essentially and primarily façades, and they possess just those qualities of unity, proportion and the mutual relation of parts resulting in a complete and satisfactory whole which every façade, to be entirely satisfactory, must possess. The list that I would suggest, then, would read as follows:

- (1) Notre Dame, Paris,
- (2) Farnese Palace,
- (3) Rheims Cathedral,
- (4) Ca Doro.
- (5) Colonnade of the Louvre,
- (6) Orvieto Cathedral.

For the other two numbers, I should perhaps agree with your list in nominating the Parthenon and the Library of St. Mark, though, for the reasons already stated, these two hardly seem to me typical and ideal façades, yet they are great examples of architecture, and may justly claim place here.

BOSTON.

R. A. CRAM.

ROBERT W. GIBSON.

The first impression one receives is that the composite opinion shown by this selection has been guided by something rather different from the pre-eminence of any of the subjects. There seems to be an effort for a selection which should be representative as well as distinctive. Perhaps this arises from the combination of such variety of views. It is hardly possible to understand how a person who considered Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris as possessing the greatest façade in the world could so sympathize with the Parthenon at Athens as to place it second. But it is of course comprehensible how the lovers of Gothic and of Grecian architecture should be so nearly equal in numbers in a large vote as to alternate in position along the list, and produce a curious mixture of motives and qualities in their selection. Bearing this in mind, the choice seems to indicate a very lively appreciation of the beauties of mediæval architecture notwithstanding the prevailing fashionable tendency toward Classic work and especially toward the schools of modern Paris. It appears to indicate, also, an appreciation of definite character in architectural composition as distinct from mere beauty of detail, or elaboration of composition, or technical perfection of any kind. The buildings selected are buildings of marked expression, and in that sense are all great; but it seems to me that from any other standpoint of criticism some of them are far from being the most perfect representatives of their style or its motive. It is hard to understand how a lover of the Renaissance could give the façade of St. Peter's at Rome so prominent a position, and pass unmentioned the beauties of the galleries and pavilions of the Louvre and the Tuilleries. It is equally difficult to define the standard of criticism in Gothic art which places Notre Dame of Paris on the list and gives no place to St. Ouen in which the same principles are evolved to the climax of their possibilities. The eighth selection in the list perhaps gives a further clue to the mental attitude which prompted it and thus adds to its value. The Ducal Palace at Venice is most peculiarly an artistic composition as it stands, probably by accident, because an experienced architect can hardly believe that the designer of the superb second story and the loggia beneath it, intended to surmount that beautiful and skilful work with the blank mass with irregular openings now resting upon it. This upper portion is an accidental success, depending largely upon the great assistance of age and climate. It is possible that the modern utilitarian builder might finish some miracle of art in a similar fashion, and not spoil it, but the accident is not likely to occur again, and if it did would even then not establish a useful precedent. It seems to me, then, that the Ducal Palace is lowered from the rank of the greatest façades by its eccentric composition, although its artistic value and beauty are recognized universally.

Another impression given by the list is that the voters were necessarily limited in their selection by their only partial familiarity with such a world-wide question. To make a correct selection one should have seen all the notable buildings, and have studied them with equal care, which of course is impossible. Few men have so wide a knowledge, and none have the necessary impartiality, so

that even when an able opinion is expressed it is necessarily based upon a limited experience, and would therefore have been much modified had that experience been enlarged. How many of us have seen the renowned Taj Mahal? If we had seen it how much would it modify our preferences? I will not undertake to answer this question. Its value is in the fact that it cannot be answered, which goes to show that the list now under discussion is of value chiefly as indicating the attitude and opinion of the voters, and is thus indicative of their experience and predilection, and is of comparatively little authority as a final answer to the question submitted to the vote.

NEW YORK CITY.

ROBERT W. GIBSON.

CHARLES F. SCHWEINFURTH.

The result of the vote awakens great interest and arouses much enthusiasm among the lovers of good architecture, each of the eight selected façades being great in their way, each possessing remarkable character and beauty. If we ask which is the greatest of these eight, would Notre Dame be the greatest? Is not greatness in architecture to be interpreted, as unusual in degree, large in extent, stately, of large consequence, grand, developing into the chief, principal, the most important? True greatness, in all things, must refer to the character; to that something which pre-eminently places it above its neighbors or surroundings. The first requisite in a great façade is its architectural character. This character is obtained first in its proportions, then in its accentuation, then its clothing, in each of which is to be considered location, adaptability, usage—the latter public or private, a home or a palace. Beautiful, historic, or interesting a façade may be,—without the architectural character it fails of being the greatest. Greatness does not signify absolute correctness; for, while St. Peter's is so often found wanting, yet its most severe critics unite in placing it foremost among the greatest architecture. Greatness must be that quality possessed, in the façade viewed, which fills the beholder with awe and wonder, giving intense satisfaction thereby, filling the heart with kindly, exuberant feelings, higher and better endeavors, greater results. Considering these elements as constituting greatness, the greatest façades must be those in which the architectural character, as expressed by proportions, solidity, of mass, simplicity and correctness of detail, marks them as unusual in degree, ennobling, sublime, great.

The Parthenon, St. Peter's, Amiens, the Farnese Palace, being the second, fifth, sixth and seventh of the selected list, meet all the requirements. To these façades I would add the Basilica of S. Francesco di Paola, Naples; Pantheon of Agrippa, Rome; Cancelleria Palace, Rome; Musée of Nantes; Riccardi Palace, Florence; each being a finished façade in itself in which all the proportions, lines and detail are so combined as to place each pre-eminently above its neighbors as the eight greatest façades in the world, considered from an architectural point of view.

CLEVELAND.

CHARLES F. SCHWEINFURTH.

S. S. BEAMAN.

Instead of Notre Dame I should select the west front of Cologne Cathedral, which, though falling short of much of the artistic charm of the French building, is entitled to rank with the very greatest architectural work. The Parthenon is conceded without question, while the exquisite order of the Erechtheum is equally deserving. The Paris Opera House lacks the purity, sublimity and repose that must characterize a great artistic work. St. Mark's Library, Venice, while admitting for it a certain beauty and grace, seems to me to be too much overwrought and unsatisfactory in detail and general composition to be classed with the greatest eight. The Library of Columbia College has a much higher claim to true greatness than this building. St. Peter's, Rome, notwithstanding certain faults, is surely entitled to rank with the eight greatest works of architecture, especially its apsidal façade, blending with and supporting the grand dome in such a noble and harmonious manner. Amiens Cathedral is a noble and charming work, but can hardly be judged to be superior as a work of art to some of the English cathedrals. Neither the Farnese Palace, nor any other residential palace, ancient or modern, is entitled to a place among the eight greatest façades. I cannot deny the claim of the Doge's Palace, Venice, to be one of the greatest architectural works. It must, however, be confessed that it is difficult to judge this building calmly, by reason of the inspiring beauty of its environment, it being the center of what is probably the most beautiful architectural group in the world. If I were asked to name the eight greatest architectural façades from an artistic point of view they would be the following:—

(1.) The Parthenon. (2.) St. Peter's: apsidal façade with dome. (3.) West front of Cologne Cathedral. (4.) United States Capitol: approach front. (5.) Doge's

Palace, Venice. (6.) St. Mark's Church, Venice. (7.) St. Paul's Cathedral, London. (8.) New School of Fine Arts, Athens.

CHICAGO.

S. S. BEAMAN.

WM. A. BORING

OF MESSRS. BORING & TILTON.

If "de gustibus non est disputandum" be true, this selection, being taken as fairly representative of the popular taste, shows that the buildings which conform to the principles of academic design are those which are considered greatest and are those which stand the test of time. The chosen façades all conform to these principles, all are set upon places where they are seen to advantage, they are symmetrical, the features are on each side of a central axis balancing each other, and they have strong horizontal divisions. France is the only country which has produced a modern façade worthy to rank with the greatest, and this is in a style distinctly French, founded upon and descended in direct line from the Renaissance, which has been the artistic expression of civilized Europe since the graduation from the perfected and beautiful Gothic, of which but two or three examples are cited. This is because she has, with the great genius she has ever shown in architecture, taken her heritage from the Renaissance, and moulded it into a virile style expressive of French sentiment and modern thought. The lesson we learn from this is, that we should take the style that has come to us in unbroken line and work into it the spirit and artistic expression of our own country; not to work as imitators or archaeologists, out to take the glorious principles of architecture which have governed all the great masters from Ictinus to Garnier, which now find expression in the Renaissance, and to mould this plastic style into a beautiful American architecture.

NEW YORK CITY.

WM. A. BORING.

DWIGHT HEALD PERKINS.

I find myself unable to "consider the greatness from a purely architectural point of view, not from that of historic or other interests." Architecture when it becomes great is like other arts—an embodiment of truth, an expression of principles and of the life of the people by whom it is projected. There is no such thing as "a purely architectural point of view" disassociated from conditions. Perfection of form in the exterior of a building is no more the criterion of greatness than is a handsome face of human character. I would not consider façades great merely because they were grammatically correct, or maintained their space relations in good proportion. If I were to make a list of the eight greatest façades I would begin by searching for the eight greatest civilizations, and select from each its purest architectural exponent. I should by all means find one example in the cradle of civilization along the Nile, but because of your limit to "façades," I would not insist in this case. The façades in Egyptian examples are not the grandest or the most typical parts of their temples. I would therefore place—(1.) The Parthenon. Because of its own perfection and its harmony with the civilization producing it. (2.) Any list of eight should, in my opinion, include the Taj Mahal, the most perfect oriental façade. It is original, based on eternal principle, and is typical of a great group of temples. An example of limitless influence has here been given in the consistent use of marble and the decoration of flat surfaces. (3.) St. Peter's in Rome. So grand and broad that no one can accuse it of borrowing its beauty from another time. (4.) Carcassonne. More a group than a single façade, but grand, massive, simple, a martial poem in masonry, a fine architectural expression of feudalism. (5.) Notre Dame. The flower of the French garden of the twelfth century. Classic in its strength and simplicity, Gothic in its loftiness and grace. (6.) Salisbury. Mentioned instead of Amiens because quite as perfect and springing from another set of conditions. (7.) Riccardi Palace. Mentioned instead of the Farnese Palace, because of its greater directness, its possession of more perfect organic construction and its elimination of unrelated ornaments and pilasters. (8.) Library of St. Mark's. A most thoroughly consistent organic structure in the Renaissance style. I wish there were a ninth place in which to put the Opera House of Paris, although it is still too new to be properly placed in relation to the world's history. I believe that the Ducal Palace should not be listed at all. The exterior is not as planned; the upper stories were originally designed to be on the inner wall, and the court has no relation to the exterior. The detail is beautiful, but the composition was unfortunately changed.

There are many great examples not touched upon that should be in any list of great works. After all, it is hard to discriminate and limit to eight examples. It would be easier to make a list of eighty than of eight, and if it were done, there would be included several great works in Japan.

CHICAGO.

DWIGHT HEALD PERKINS.

WALTER COOK,
PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY OF BEAUX-ARTS
ARCHITECTS.

What we should hope to obtain from such a voting contest as this would be some indication of the tendencies of the younger members of the profession, some hint as to the direction which the architectural work of the near future in this country is to take. It is probable that most of the voters have been students in some of our architectural schools, and the teaching of these schools would naturally be reflected to some degree in the list of "great façades." This hope hardly seems to have been fulfilled. One is immediately struck with the unbridled eclecticism, the excessive catholicity of the list, where the Parthenon and the Cathedral of Amiens, the Paris Opera House and the Ducal Palace walk arm in arm. It would almost appear as though, as in American political combinations, an effort had been made to conciliate all sections lest some particular style or epoch should feel itself slighted. Now a broad and generous appreciation of all that is best in art is assuredly admirable in itself. Few true artists fail to reach it, most of them after years of observation and study and striving to create. But it may well be questioned whether it is well to start in one's career without a very definite idea, a bias, even, in favor of some particular kind of architecture; it is really better to be illiberal and bigoted, rather than to sin by an exaggerated breadth of view, which has in it nothing of the force of youth, and which too often results in vagueness and indecision of purpose. *Qui trop embrasse mal étreint.*

It is difficult in the result of the voting to see any decided tendencies, any progress towards a dominant school among our younger men. To many this may seem no misfortune; it would certainly indicate a continuance of our present heterogeneity of architecture, if indeed any conclusions are to be drawn.

NEW YORK CITY.

WALTER COOK.

GEORGE CARY.

The Parthenon hardly presents today a great architectural façade. It is a ruin and leaves everything to the imagination of what it was. The façades of the Cathedral of Amiens and Notre Dame de Paris, are impressive, and represent a less civilized age than we have today. Much of the detail on these façades is out of scale and out of reason. There is room for too much criticism in the study of proportion in the Farnese Palace to rank it with the following: The Opera House in Paris may well be classed among the greatest architectural façades, for the reason that it embodies the work of one man. The details are as original as is possible in the Classic style, and the combination of different materials and colors is harmonious; and the whole effect is grand and less open to criticism than most works of art. St. Peter's at Rome is undeniably one of the grandest architectural façades, and so also the buildings surrounding the Piazza of St. Mark's in Venice. Standing in the Place de la Concorde in Paris, viewing the Madeleine and the buildings on each side facing the Rue Rivoli, there is presented one of the grandest architectural façades; the buildings surrounding the Place de Carrousel form another. The Capitol at Washington, though open to criticism, as are all works of art, presents one of the grandest façades, and to my mind should be ranked among the foremost. The Parliament buildings of London, viewed from the terrace of the House of Lords, present an architectural façade surpassed by few.

BUFFALO.

GEORGE CARY.

W. T. COMSTOCK,
EDITOR OF *Architecture and Building*.

The selection is interesting and has the added merit of tending to promote research. Recognizing, as we must, that there are no canons of architectural taste rigid enough to determine such a question with mathematical accuracy, it might be of advantage to follow this up by asking your readers to give their understanding of what "a purely architectural point of view" is, and by what process of reasoning they reached their decisions. Architecture has been frequently defined; Professor Hamlin in his "Architectural History" says it is the "art of building beautifully," Ruskin insists that "ornamentation is the principal part of architecture." Guided by the one, elaborate decoration would be the decisive element; by the other the choice would be as various as the different ideas of beauty prevailing in the minds of your voters. Form, proportion and beauty combined in simple and restful harmony are the essentials to good architecture. These essentials are well exemplified in the Parthenon. The circumstances of his times afforded the architect of that building an opportunity which may never occur again. He worked in a period when ideas of form and proportion were

fully developed, yet he was not overpowered by the multitude of architectural examples and the restrictions of precedent, and had great room for original conceptions. The result was a simple well proportioned and appropriately ornamented building. Judged by its influence on the world's architecture this building stands pre-eminently the first. In it may be found the inspiration of Roman Renaissance and the best work of modern times. The selections seem to indicate two lines of thought, one inspired by the, the Classic, model, and the other by the Gothic. Notre Dame naturally takes high rank in the latter, and the vote indicates many admirers of that style which must always hold the first place in ecclesiastical work. But space is too brief to enter into the merits of Garnier's Opera House, St. Mark's Library or other of the selections. I have only to commend the undertaking as likely to promote research which may result in better architectural ideas.

NEW YORK CITY.

W. T. COMSTOCK.

ROBERT S. PEABODY,
OF MESSRS. PEABODY & STEARNS.

I have just read this sentence: "In literature as in science, comparison is only fruitful when the subject is placed in its right genus and class." This may be said with equal force of architecture. Greatness, even when it is "considered from a purely architectural point of view," places an architectural façade in a very vague classification. I suppose it means a prominence of qualities that make a building conspicuous and typical and illustrative of the best maxims. But who is to say whether beauty of detail or of composition or of color weigh most as elements of such greatness? The façade of the Opera House in Paris perhaps belongs in the list as a well balanced, carefully grouped frontispiece, in spite of detail that compared with much other work is vulgar. On the other hand, the front of Amiens Cathedral depends largely on its detail for its beauty, and many cathedral fronts might perhaps be ranked higher if the question were one of composition. Then again, unless we give great weight to color and picturesque effect, the front of the Doge's Palace might not appear on the list. The buildings named have, however, one quality in common. Whether of the Classic or Mediæval or Renaissance periods, the scheme of each is a well balanced, symmetrical composition. It was thought, not so very long ago, that Classic and Renaissance work alone had these qualities. Many now find that similar methods underlie the best architectural design in any style. It is probably because all the façades named are well proportioned and are laid out on monumental principles that your voters selected them regardless of style. It seems to me that on these grounds the selection was good.

I do not know what end is sought in making such a list. Perhaps you wish to show an inquirer, by means of it, what architecture is when at its best. But architectural design can be of the greatest interest to us in so many different ways, and "greatness" is so indefinite a quality, that I really do not see much good in making such lists as that before us.

BOSTON.

ROBERT S. PEABODY.

E. A. KENT.

I think little change may be fairly made in the list of eight greatest façades; nevertheless I have made the following list solely from its effect on me, and not on critical estimate of details, and I exclude any mention of Indian types for the reason that, like many other architects, I know them only by photographs. I am of the opinion that well-travelled judges would rate some of them ahead of several European façades we are rating so high.

- (1) Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris.
- (2) The Parthenon, Athens.
- (3) The Opera House, Paris.
- (4) U.S. Capitol, Washington.
- (5) St. Peter's, Rome.
- (6) St. Mark's Cathedral, Venice.
- (7) East Façade (Colonnade) Louvre, Paris.
- (8) The Ducal Palace, Venice.

In selecting examples in this way an architect is too apt to give undue weight to a work that is pure in its style, or even scholastic, and so to exclude work the layman prefers from its proportion and penetrations alone. I therefore place the Capitol at Washington as greater than St. Mark's Library, and I consider some mediæval fronts, notably Pierrefonds, Coucy, Warwick and Carnarvon, push all our selections closely for first place in "greatness." If mass and perforation were all that impressed one, they would lead. I think a list of the twenty or twenty-five best façades would be interesting to secure in the same way you have secured the eight.

BUFFALO.

E. A. KENT.

SYLVESTER BAXTER.

I have been so deeply impressed by so many noble façades, and the emotions of grandeur and beauty have proceeded from such diverse elements that the idea of comparative greatness in their character has never occurred to me, and I believe that it would be well nigh impossible to draw up a satisfactory list. But were I to attempt the task I am sure, at least, that the list agreed upon in the recent contest would be very remote from my ideal. To possess the character of greatness an architectural work must, I think, together with artistic correctness, possess two emotional and inspirational elements: that of impressiveness, or grandeur, affecting the beholder as he is affected by the majesty of a sublime mountain; and combined with this, it must have the character of richness or of exquisite charm, to suggest a superabundance, an inexhaustible wealth of grace and beauty. The list impresses me with its limitations, confined as it is to the Gothic and the Renaissance, with the exception of a single example of the Classic, and omitting a masterpiece like the Taj Mahal. It includes two really bad examples—the meretricious Paris Opera House, and St. Peter's in Rome—the impression of the latter being that of bulk rather than mass, of hugeness instead of grandeur. I would also look elsewhere than to the Ducal Palace in Venice, which, while it has a beauty that gives it the exquisite element, lacks grandeur, and is more picturesque than majestic. Were I to include a play-house in my list I would be inclined to rank the Stadt Theater of Leipzig at the head for its noble beauty. And were it permissible to include a work that has passed from existence I would certainly give high place to the creation of the late Charles B. Atwood, the Peristyle and its flanking structures at the Columbian World's Fair of 1893. Practically all of Mr. Atwood's work for that occasion, while built ephemerally, was designed enduringly, and transformed to substantial material could at once have been put to permanent use. Atwood was one of the world's true geniuses in architecture, and in the memory of visitors to Chicago in 1893 his Peristyle was a thing of beauty that will remain a joy forever. Fortunately one of his creations there was built, as well as designed, for permanence, and therefore I would include in my list, for its felicitous site and its ineffable charm of mass, proportion, and delicacy of feeling, his Palace of the Fine Arts, now the Field Columbian Museum, in Jackson Park, Chicago.

MALDEN, MASS.

SYLVESTER BAXTER.

CLAUDE FAYETTE BRAGDON,
OF MESSRS. BRAGDON & HILLMAN.

It is impossible to name the eight best façades in the world, as it is to name the ten best novels, or the ten best pictures. The value of such a contest consists not in the result, but in the effort on the part of each competitor. The present list is more interesting than admirable; but this is easily accounted for when it is remembered that the most popular "gent" of the Fireman's Fair is not always he who receives the greatest number of votes. Like the underbred people who are found in good society, there are façades in the list which owe their presence there to assertiveness rather than to merit. Still, when all is said, they form in the aggregate a distinguished company. Number one, Notre Dame, is admirable; but to find the Parthenon linked with the Paris Opera is like seeing Athene Parthenos hand in glove with La Dame aux Camelias. The Library of St. Mark embodies everything that was best in the not altogether admirable sixteenth century Italian architecture, but the façade of St. Peter's is out of place in this select company. It is the bloated millionaire at the dinner of distinguished litterateurs. Perhaps some of the competitors thought that the façade might be supposed to include the beautiful dome, but this could be so only in the mind of an architectural draughtsman who thinks of a building, as he draws it, in terms of two dimensions instead of three. As a matter of fact, the façade and the dome are like the sun and moon in this, that as one rises the other sets—that is, as a person approaches the façade the dome sinks out of sight behind it, while at the distance at which the dome assumes its proper grandeur, the façade is concealed by surrounding buildings, or is unintelligible because so far away. Every careful student of architecture should know that, leaving out of account its worthlessness as a design, the present façade was constructed and the nave lengthened, in violation of Michael Angelo's intention, which was to have the dome dominate the whole. Amiens is wonderful, truly, but does it not stand in the same relation to some other buildings not on the list, as does the statue which shows intricate lacework carved in marble to the severe nudity of a Greek, or the archaic simplicity of an early Italian figure? The Farnese is worthy of being included, yet it is clearly more open to criticism—it is less perfect than the Strozzi, for example. About the Ducal Palace there can hardly be a question. This brings us to

the end of the list with how many masterpieces omitted? Where, for example, is the Taj Mahal? Standing proudly aloof, no doubt, criticising the company, like the Indian prince in Kipling's stories. Where is St. Mark's, that iridescent dream of beauty? America, too, has fared badly, and perhaps deservedly so; yet if the Boston Library had three hundred years behind it, it might be thought as admirable as St. Peter's, or if the Beaux-Arts were in Boston, it might be mentioned in the same hushed breath with the Paris Opera even.

ROCHESTER.

CLAUDE FAYETTE BRAGDON.

THOMAS HASTINGS,

OF MESSRS. CARRERE & HASTINGS.

I feel at a loss to know what to say with reference to this choice, and, especially so, as the eight façades chosen might be considered, without one exception, as amongst a few of the highest conceptions in the history of architecture. It seems to me, however, impossible to place them in any order. Who can say whether the façade of Notre Dame, in all its beauty, is more beautiful than the Parthenon? They are so far apart in character, in composition, and the conditions which the architects had to solve were so entirely different, that it seems like trying to compare a beautiful woman with a handsome house. It seems to me, however, that a few words might be said without giving any positive order. St. Peter's seems to me far down on the list, because, in my opinion, Michael Angelo's dome is not only, perhaps, the greatest dome ever built, but it is certainly the most original, when we remember that every dome of its type, or which resembles it in any way, has been built since, and it seems as though every dome yet to be built would of necessity be further influenced by St. Peter's. Les Invalides, the Val de Grace, St. Peter's of London, and almost every dome built since St. Peter's, resembles it in its general composition, and to me it is marvellous to think of this great originality and vitality from a man over seventy years old. It was very gratifying to me to see the Paris Opera House on your list, as the one and only modern building selected. I believe that this building will, in somewhat the same way as did the dome of St. Peter's, influence all architects who have theatres or opera houses to build for many generations to come. It is a great conception, and I know of no building where the exterior so completely interprets the plan and expresses in design the purpose of the monument.

Another interesting fact is that St. Mark's Library in Venice is put higher on the list than the Farnese Palace in Rome. This fact has pleased me because I have always felt that, as a general thing, American students have given too much thought to the very early transition Renaissance, of which the Farnese Palace is such a beautiful expression, and that in their study of this period of architecture they have too little appreciated the later Renaissance in Italy.

NEW YORK CITY.

THOMAS HASTINGS.

LOUIS MULLGARDT.

It seems particularly noteworthy that the late Garnier should have been the only architect living within the past two centuries, who has been honored in the recent voting contest established by the BROCHURE. It is also a notable fact that all the subjects selected emanate from Latin countries, excepting the Parthenon. The acknowledged spirit of "Age and Historical Adoration of Architecture" is difficult for mankind to shake off. This spirit has manifested itself in the selection of the Temple of Minerva, aside from its worthiness. The structure has been in partial ruin and decay for generations past, and no person of this period has beheld it in its "living" state. The remains, however, cannot be dissociated from that never-to-be-forgotten mythological spirit, which created it; and the romantic halo of ancient Athens of over twenty centuries ago will continue to hover over its ruins until its complete destruction. The venerable pile seems to whisper fanciful tales of pristine beauty and grandeur, of which, to our minds, there can be no equal. The same motif, proportions and embellishments reproduced today in our land, would likely meet with much skepticism from those who will, at the same time, go into raptures over the divine beauties of a past Athenian Parthenon. The selection of the Ducal Palace, with its lower story of half-buried columns, its proportionately weak two-story arcades and tracery substructure, supporting what appears to be a great excess weight, consisting of nearly solid diaper-patterned masonry, is assuredly founded on veneration of age, intensified by history and surroundings. We would scarcely countenance a modern repetition of so frail a design, whereto we might apply the same criticism which is being used respecting some of our modern "sky scrapers," the first story walls of which apparently consist of single sheets of plate-glass. The selection all told presents a unique composite of ideas and taste, commendable and truly American.

ST. LOUIS.

LOUIS MULLGARDT.

C. H. BLACKALL.

Assuming that the choice was intended to be based upon a consideration of façades only, the resulting list seems to refer to entire buildings. It is open to question whether the west front of Notre Dame is not a less truly great achievement than the masterly handling of the chévet, while the façade of St. Peter's is hardly considered a great architectural work, though the building as a whole ranks among the best. After all, an expression such as is indicated by this list is a matter of personal point of view and susceptibility to specific influences. All of the eight buildings mentioned are great, and the list might be extended to include many more which are equally great. Surely the Taj Mahal is as remarkable an achievement in its way as the Farnese Palace; and it is quite probable that Barry's Houses of Parliament would appeal to some far more strongly than Garnier's Opera House. That Notre Dame Cathedral at Paris should rank first is somewhat of a surprise in these days of Renaissance revival, and if a Gothic building is to be placed first on the list it does not seem quite fair to put Amiens Cathedral sixth; and moreover, this list disregards the façade of Rheims Cathedral, which does not appear at all, though certainly as full, logical and far richer than either Notre Dame or Amiens. As a matter of pure imaginative, consistent design, taking the building either as a whole or as a façade, St. Mark's ought hardly to take a back seat for St. Peter's, though the former does not appear in the contest. But after all one cannot quarrel very seriously with such a list. It is a good one, and every façade named would without doubt be included in any list which might be made to comprehend all of the great creations of the past.

BOSTON.

C. H. BLACKALL.

J. B. NOEL WYATT,
OF MESSRS. WYATT & NOLTING.

The difficulty in making such a selection seems to me to lie in this: What is the basis or standard by which an architectural façade may be ranked as one of the "greatest in the world"? An example may be the best of its class or kind, but that class not perhaps of sufficient importance or dignity to rank as among the greatest in the world. The Parthenon at Athens, Notre Dame of Paris and the Farnese Palace at Rome, are the greatest examples of great subjects—temples and palaces. The Opera House of Paris, most gorgeous example of its kind, expresses its purpose, its nationality and its epoch, but is vulgar in its lack of reserve. The Ducal Palace, Venice, owes its greatness largely to its exquisite coloring, lavish wealth of detail, location, and inseparable historic romantic association. St. Peter's, Rome, the Amiens Cathedral and St. Mark's Library, Venice, I deem inferior to the others named, both in architectural proportion and detail; and the Library is not expressive of its purpose. I would suggest as worthy of being included in the list, the Ionic colonnade of the Berlin Museum, St. George's Hall, Liverpool, and, recognizing its faults, but also its imposing grandeur—the east façade of the Capitol at Washington.

BALTIMORE.

J. B. NOEL WYATT.

BRUCE PRICE.

It is the mistake of all of the young enthusiastic dilettantes to jump into archaeology for answering such a question; they mistake the building for the façade. Notre Dame is a façade, and one of the most glorious in the world, but the façade of the Parthenon is nothing without the building, and it is the structure and not alone any single one of its faces that makes it great and beautiful; and even if you rob it of its wonderful history it would be marvelously beautiful. The beauty of the Parthenon to me is for what it represents and stands for; its purity, its power, its purpose, its embellishment of the intellectual in art, in its columns as well as in its metopes, that make it so glorious, and its site and all the halo of literature and life that surrounds it that make it a pile in a class by itself. A good deal of this sort of thing falls upon Notre Dame, but Notre Dame, as I have said, has a glorious façade, even were its structure not there to make it more glorious still. The sentiment that created it adds another flavor to it, and even without this Notre Dame is the most beautiful thing almost that man has ever created; but between Notre Dame and the Parthenon there is this difference: the Parthenon could be built today and a use found for it, and the spirit that inspired it could be fanned into life again, I feel quite sure, but the myth out of which Notre Dame sprang is dead and will never revive again; it seems beyond the scope of possibility that the human race would fall back into the superstitious bogs that made such structures possible. I can see no use today in reviving it, nor can I see a peg upon which the Gothic cloak could be hung. The façade of the Opera House was a marvellous one when it was completed and is a marvel today of beautiful

proportion, but it is only a question of time when its outrageous detail will make it commonplace. St. Mark's Library is, as it was and always will be, perfectly beautiful. The other four I would rather say nothing about. They are types of power and beauty, and the last is a curious conceit; it is great because it is against all the rules and known traditions of art, and still one of the most beautiful things in Europe, but it has no use and never should be imitated or copied in any way.

NEW YORK CITY.

BRUCE PRICE.

WILLIAM ROTCH WARE,
EDITOR OF *The American Architect*.

I am tempted to write in protest of this undertaking, amusing and perhaps interesting as it may be. I protest simply on the ground that the vote adds but one more pinnacle to the spurious reputations which have been built up by those who have a printing-press at command, enlarging reputations already established by those in earlier years who also had printing-presses at their command.

If any one will give the matter a little consideration, I think he will find that the reputations of most artists—whether painters, sculptors, or architects—just as of all military and naval heroes, are the result of nothing more valuable than the revolutions of the printing-press turning out the hackneyed phrases of the penny-a-liner. Most certain proof of this asseveration is to be found, of course, in the annals of military history where the names of Sampson and Schley, and Wainwright, and the others will be passed down for ages, while others, equally heroic and worthy of the honors of literature, will never be heard of. This list of eight buildings which has been arrived at through this vote adds nothing to any real knowledge which anybody has on the subject of real or comparative excellence as between one work of architecture and another. Every one of them lies on the plain beaten track where travelling is easiest, and so has acquired a reputation through mere vulgar increment of sight-seers. Each building in the list is well enough in its way, but I am not at all certain that any one of them would be found in such a list formed by an architect of native artistic ability who had never read the literature of the profession. On the other hand, the valuation which any observer puts upon a work of architecture depends not so much upon architectural canons of taste as upon his mood at the moment, affected by the condition of his stomach, by the surroundings of the landscape, the light, the time of day, the weather, companionship, and an infinity of other uncertain conditions which vary in each case. I feel quite sure that you would do more real good by publishing the names of the eight buildings which received the *smallest* number of votes than by publishing these. In this secondary list would surely be mentioned, by men whose taste could be respected, buildings less well known because of their literary fame, and which so would be of really greater interest because of merits which depend less upon the voice of common repute.

BOSTON.

WM. ROTCH WARE.

JOSEPH WARREN YOST,
OF MESSRS. YOST & PACKARD.

I note, first, that among these buildings there are one Greek, three French and four Italian; three are Gothic, one Classic and four Renaissance; three are Christian churches, one a Pagan temple, two are palaces, one a library, and one a theatre; that all are built by the Arian branch of the human family, which is not supposed to be the great building race of the world.

Architectural greatness rests upon four qualities—excellence of composition, richness and harmony of detail, greatness of dimensions and nobility of materials. Judging by these lines, neither one of these façades is greatest in all, some of them in none, of these requirements. But it is not necessary that they should be in order to hold the places consigned to them. It is only necessary that they should have the highest average. Again, it is to be remembered that only façades are to be judged, and that many great buildings do not have great façades. Remembering all this, the judgment rendered by your readers does not appear to be so far wrong as might be supposed. I am inclined to wonder why St. Mark's Library was included, and the Louvre, and many other façades which come to mind, were omitted. A discussion of the quality of the façades which seem to demand a place in the list, would extend too far for this article. This much can be said of the façades selected,—they all possess remarkable and exceptional architectural qualities; and while we might not agree with the judgment in all respects, it is nevertheless entitled to high respect for the fact that it seems to have been entirely independent of style, country, time or purpose, and is an honest effort upon the part of your readers to decide the question fairly.

COLUMBUS, OHIO.

JOSEPH WARREN YOST.